

FORT MCMURRAY, ALBERTA  
Statistical Outline

POLAR  
PAM  
5281

POLARPAM



FORT MCMURRAY, ALBERTA - Statistical Outline

LOCATION:             $56^{\circ}45' N$              $111^{\circ}27' W$

On Athabasca River, north eastern Alberta  
20 miles from Plat, Great Canadian Oil Sands

NAME:                Named after Inspector McMurray of the Hudson's Bay Company who ordered the rebuilding of the town in 1790. Was there in 1790?

POPULATION:        6,500      (1969 estimate)      7,900, 7,71.  
                          2,614      (1966 - DBS)

approximately twice the population since 1961  
(1951 population estimate - 926)

AREA:                2,066 acres

<u>CLIMATE:</u>	<u>Jan.</u>	<u>July</u>	<u>Nov.</u>	<u>Yearly</u>
mean rainfall				16.32 in.
mean snowfall				47.2 in.
highest recorded				102° F
lowest recorded				-60° F

MEDIA:              CBC radio relay from Edmonton  
                          Closed circuit TV at plant site only

ACCESS:             Water - barges on Athabasca River chain  
                          Road - Alberta Highway No. 63  
                          Rail - Great Slave Lake Railway  
                          Air - Airport can accommodate jets - P.W.A.  
                          2 charter airlines

MEDICAL:            51 bed hospital

EDUCATIONAL  
FACILITIES:        Elementary public school  
                          Seperate public and secondary school  
                          Adult vocational school



## FORT MCMURRAY

The Hudson's Bay Company established a new fort in 1870 at the foot of the Athabasca River rapids on the site of Fort of the Forks built by Peter Pond in 1790. Its purpose was to be a centre for transportation: a terminus for the steamboats from Edmonton and a transfer point for goods transported by barges, destined for the Territories. With the routes that branch out of the three principal lakes, Athabasca, Great Slave and Great Bear, the fort was linked with an estimated 2,700 miles of navigable water.

As the water transportation declined in importance, road and rail links were improved. The all-weather Mackenzie highway, the Great Slave Lake Railway and air freight routes now maintain Fort McMurray's importance as a centre for receiving and shipping between southern Alberta and the North.

The town, incorporated in 1947, is an amalgamation of the original fort, and of the community of Waterways to the east. The area between the two, a three and one half mile expanse known as "Prairie" houses the extensive railway and river freight yards.

The economy of the town is closely linked to the future of the Great Canadian Oil Sands Limited and their petroleum extraction operations in the Athabasca Oil Sands at a site about 20 miles north of Fort McMurray.

The Globe and Mail business section early this year outlined some of their difficulties:

"Those were the days of higher hopes, when representatives of business and service industries arrived here by the planeload.

"Now, less than two years later, the huge plant still grinds periodically to a halt. This week it was for a change of refining facilities, but more often it was rendered impotent because of costly breakdowns. The town is in a temporary limbo because of the haggling in Calgary over another venture, proposed by Syncrude Canada Limited.

"Despite the \$10 million annual payroll that the 489 G.C.O.S. employees inject into local circulation, Fort McMurray was designed as a modern northern outpost for the much bigger awakening of Northern Alberta. Therefore, the town cannot sustain itself on income from a 'stop-and-go' plant alone.

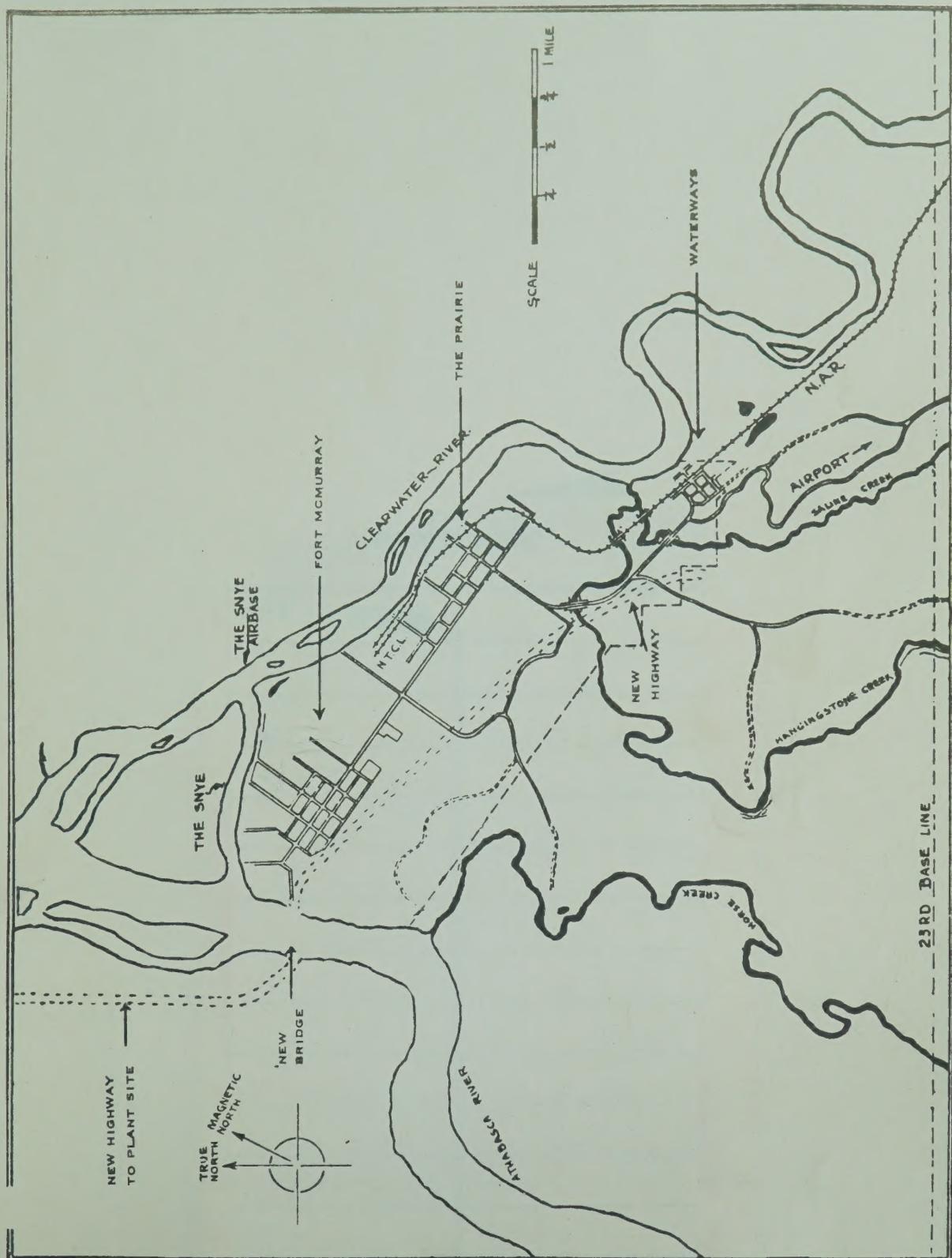
"Spending by G.C.O.S. does not end at the plant gate. Its housing programme was responsible for 140 buildings last year and 50 more homes are to be built this year.

"A Chamber of Commerce official admits that speculation among businessmen was partly responsible for failures and for a scaling down of commercial activities. But then again, Fort McMurray was a speculation of grand proportions".

The government approval in September 1969 for Syncrude Canada Limited to proceed with the establishment of a \$300 million oil sands extraction plant promises to be a boost to the economy. The plant is to be located one mile north and five miles west of the Great Canadian Oil Sands plant.



# FORT McMURRAY - ALBERTA



Source: Survey of Fort McMurray - Dep't of Industry & Development  
Gov't of Province of Alberta



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